

***** SPECIAL NOTICE *****

BSAI Crab IFQ Hired Master Permit Requirements

It has come to our attention that there is some confusion about the requirement to have NMFS authorize a Hired Master to harvest IFQ crab. This Special Notice is intended to explain this requirement. Hired Master information and regulations are found in Federal regulations found at 50 CFR 680.4.

What is a Hired Master?

A “Hired Master” is an individual who, *at the request of an IFQ Permit holder, and on approval by NMFS*, has been authorized to fish another person’s specific IFQ permit. Some IFQ permit holders *must* use Hired Masters to fish their IFQ; some *may* use Hired Masters, and some types of IFQ *may never* be fished by Hired Masters, the IFQ permit holder must personally be on board.

Who must use a Hired Master to fish their crab IFQ permit(s)?

- All non-individual entities (corporations, partnerships, crab harvesting cooperatives, etc.) that hold crab IFQ permits **must** use NMFS-authorized Hired Masters to fish their IFQ permits. Even if you are a shareholder, partner, or member of the IFQ permit holder, the IFQ permit holder must formally obtain authorization from NMFS to use that shareholder, partner, or member as its Hired Master.
- Any IFQ assigned to a crab harvesting cooperatives must be fished by a Hired Master authorized for the cooperative’s IFQ permits and vessels.

Who may use a Hired Master to fish their crab IFQ permit(s)?

Individuals holding CVO or CPO IFQ permits are not required to use a Hired Master and may choose to be on board the vessel and harvest their own IFQ crab. However, any individual who holds a CVO or CPO IFQ permit may hire a master to fish his/her IFQ as long as he or she owns at least 10% of the vessel on which the IFQ crab is to be harvested.

What types of crab IFQ may not be fished by a Hired Master?

“Crew” or “Captain” IFQ (CVC and CPC types), if held by an individual—not assigned to a cooperative, may only be fished by the IFQ permit holder and *may not* be fished by a Hired Master. CVC and CPC IFQ assigned to a cooperative **must** be fished by that cooperative’s hired master.

How do I obtain authorization for a Hired Master to fish my crab IFQ permit(s)?

If you are an IFQ permit holder eligible to use a Hired Master (see above), you must apply to NMFS for approval by submitting the form “*Application for Crab IFQ Hired Master Permit*” (Application). The application is available from the Restricted Access Management (RAM) Program at 1-800-304-4846 (option #2), or online at:

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/crab/rat/ram/hiredskipperapp.pdf>

You must submit an Application for each combination of individual Master, IFQ permit (s)he will fish, and each vessel (s)he will use. Therefore, you will have to submit another Application when you wish to add, delete, or change individuals, IFQ permit, and/or vessels.

Unless (s)he has already been issued a NMFS Alaska Region personal identification number (NMFS ID), the Hired Master will be issued one, which uniquely identifies this individual to us. Hired Masters also need to be licensed by the State of Alaska, Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission. And, (s)he must have a copy of both the IFQ permit under which s(he) is fishing and his/her IFQ Hired Master Permit. These permit and NMFS ID numbers will be needed to report crab IFQ landings (s)he makes and for which (s)he signs the fish tickets or landing receipts.

Finally,

Thank you for your cooperation in implementing the Crab Rationalization Program. Again, if you have questions about the Hired Master requirements or require other assistance with the program, please feel free to contact NMFS/AKR/RAM at 1-800-304-4846 (select option #2).